Strength of Assam Rifles

801. SHRI RISHANG KEISHING: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the present strength of Assam Rifles in Battalion;

(b) the States where they are posted permanently or temporarily; and

(c) whether there is any plan to increase the strength of Assam Rifles to meet its requirement in the North-Eastern Region and other hilly region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) Sir, the present strenghth of Assam Rifles Bn. is 1250.

(b) and (c) It will not be in public interest to give details of deployment of the force and its augmentation plan.

Shivani Bhatnagar assassination case

†802. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the years passed since the assassination of the journalist, Shivani Bhatnagar and number of persons interrogated in this case;

(b) whether Police came to any conclusion from the interrogation; if so, the details thereof and it not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Police had any suspicion on any particular officer in respect of said assassination and the permission was not granted to the Police interrogate that officer, and if so, the department of the said officer; and

(d) whether Government propose to get the case investigated by C.B.I.; if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) Shivani Bhatnagar was murdered on 23rd June, 1993. More than 200 persons have so far been interrogated in connection with this case.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) During the course of investigation, the police has been able to identify some suspects.

(c) No, Sir. All the suspects in this case have been interrogated.

(d) No, Sir. The Crime Branch of Delhi Police, which is investigating this case, has sufficient expertise in investigating such cases.

Devolution of more powers to certain States

803. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering devolution of more powers to certain States;

(b) if so, what is the rationale behind the proposal and its salient features; and

(c) what is the time schedule envisaged by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) and (b) The Government of India had constituted a Commission in June, 1983 under the chairmanship of the Justice R.S. Sarkaria "to examine and review the working of existing arrangements between the Union and the States in regard to powers, functions and responsibilities in all spheres and recommend such changes or other measures as may be necessary with a view to developing harmonious Centre-State Relations". It gave its recommendations on all aspects affecting Centre-State relations.

The Inter-State Council which consists of all Chief Ministers and Administrators of States and UTs, has considered the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission and accepted/taken decision on a number of recommendations for devolution of more powers to the State Governments. These recommendations related to administrative, legislative and financial powers etc. to the States and are at various stages of implementation by the Ministries/Departments of the Union Government.

The Government is committed to continuing its endeavour to wide ranging devolution of powers to the States that lead to efficiency in administration, acceleration in development and fullest realization of the creative potential of all section of our people.

(c) Devolution of powers to the State is a continuous process and no time schedule for it can be fixed.